

C L A I M S

In The Claims:

1. An exercise apparatus comprising:
 - a frame;
 - a housing coupled to and at least partially surrounding said frame;
 - a user engagement mechanism coupled to said frame for relative movement with respect thereto;
 - a resistance varying mechanism coupled to said frame and associated with said user engagement mechanism, said resistance varying mechanism being operative to cause a change of an exertion by a user engaged with the user engagement mechanism during an exercise session;
 - control circuitry at least partially surrounded by said housing and electrically coupled to said resistance varying mechanism;
 - a loudspeaker; and
 - an interface having outputs electrically coupled to said control circuitry and to said loudspeaker, said interface being operationally receptive to externally generated signals including an externally generated control circuitry signal and an externally generated audio signal including vocal content, whereby said exercise apparatus can be externally controlled within an exercise session with the capability of both varying a resistance of said user engagement mechanism and providing vocal content to a user.
2. An exercise system as recited in claim 1 wherein said vocal content includes the voice of a virtual personal trainer.

3. An exercise system as recited in claim 1 wherein said user engagement mechanism is provided with at least one of a substantially planar foot engagement surface and a graspable bar.

4. An exercise system as recited in claim 1 wherein said control circuitry includes a microprocessor.

5. An exercise system as recited in claim 1 wherein said resistance varying mechanism includes at least one of a brake and a motor.

6. An exercise apparatus comprising:

a user engagement mechanism is provided with at least one of a substantially planar foot engagement surface and a graspable bar;

an exertion varying mechanism coupled to said user engagement mechanism, said exertion varying mechanism being operative to cause a change of an exertion by a user engaged with the user engagement mechanism during an exercise session; and

circuitry electrically coupled to said exertion varying mechanism and being operationally receptive to externally generated signals including an externally generated control circuitry signal and an externally generated audio signal including vocal content, whereby said exercise apparatus can be externally controlled within an exercise session with the capability of both

varying an exertion of said user and providing auditory output including vocal content to said user.

7. An exercise system as recited in claim 6 further comprising external circuitry provided separately from said exercise apparatus and operative to provide said externally generated signals.

8. An exercise system as recited in claim 7 wherein said external circuitry includes a microprocessor.

9. An exercise system as recited in claim 8 wherein said external circuitry includes a personal computer system.

10. An exercise system as recited in claim 9 wherein said personal computer system is coupled to a remote server by, at least in part, a network.

11. An exercise system as recited in claim 10 wherein said network includes a wide area network.

12. An exercise system as recited in claim 6 wherein said vocal content includes the voice of a virtual personal trainer.

13. An exercise system as recited in claim 6 wherein said control circuitry includes a microprocessor.

14. An exercise system as recited in claim 6 wherein said resistance varying mechanism includes at least one of a brake and a motor.

15. An exercise system comprising:

(a) an exercise apparatus including:

a frame;

a housing coupled to and at least partially surrounding said frame;

a user engagement mechanism coupled to said frame for relative movement with respect thereto;

a resistance varying mechanism coupled to said frame and associated with said user engagement mechanism, said resistance varying mechanism being operative to cause a change of an exertion by a user engaged with the user engagement mechanism during an exercise session;

an audio output device; and

internal circuitry at least partially surrounded by said housing and electrically coupled to said resistance varying mechanism and said audio output device, said internal circuitry being operationally responsive to externally generated signals including an externally generated control circuitry signal and an externally generated audio

signal including vocal content, whereby said exercise apparatus can be externally controlled within an exercise session with the capability of both varying a resistance of said user engagement mechanism and providing auditory output including vocal content to a user; and

(b) external circuitry provided separately from said exercise apparatus and operative to provide said externally generated signals.

16. An exercise system as recited in claim 15 wherein said external circuitry includes a microprocessor.

17. An exercise system as recited in claim 16 wherein said external circuitry includes a personal computer system.

18. An exercise system as recited in claim 17 wherein said external circuitry includes a personal computer system coupled to a remote server by, at least in part, a network.

19. An exercise system as recited in claim 18 wherein said network includes a wide area network.

20. An exercise system as recited in claim 15 wherein said vocal output includes the voice of a virtual personal trainer.

21. An exercise system as recited in claim 15 wherein said user engagement mechanism is provided with at least one of a substantially planar foot engagement surface and a graspable bar.

22. An exercise system as recited in claim 15 wherein said internal circuitry includes a microprocessor.

23. An exercise system as recited in claim 15 wherein said resistance varying mechanism includes at least one of a brake and a motor.

24. An exercise system as recited in claim 15 further comprising an electrical connection between said external circuitry and said internal circuitry.